

Robert joined the Air Force Reserve Officers' Training Corps and is a member of the Arnold Air Society. He plans to continue his education and training to be of service as a U.S. Air Force test pilot. On December 18, 2008, Robert successfully completed the Carl A. Spaatz Exam, the final stage of a long and grueling journey through 16 rigorous skill tests. Having overcome this final obstacle, he now joins the ranks of the Civil Air Patrol's best and brightest as a recipient of the General Carl A. Spaatz Award for outstanding cadets.

HONORING MARK THORNTON

HON. GEORGE RADANOVICH

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 13, 2009

Mr. RADANOVICH. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Mark Thornton upon his retirement as Tuolumne County Supervisor, District IV. Supervisor Thornton was honored by the Tuolumne County Board of Supervisors during a regularly scheduled board of supervisors meeting held on December 16, 2008.

Mark Thornton moved to Tuolumne County in 1976 after earning his bachelor's of arts degree in sociology from California State University, Fullerton. He spent many years as a historian and consultant, working with local, State and Federal agencies on various projects. He was an active participant in the public arena and served in several leadership positions including the Groveland Community Service District Board of Directors from 1979 through November 1983; Tuolumne County Historic Preservation Review Commission from September 1990 through January 1997; Tuolumne County Blue Ribbon Growth Management Committee from 1993 through 1995; Oak Grove Cemetery District from May 1995 through January 1997. In 1996 Mr. Thornton decided to run for a seat on the Tuolumne County Board of Supervisors to represent District IV. His election was a close one; he beat the incumbent by less than 10 votes.

Over the last 12 years as a supervisor, Mr. Thornton has worked tirelessly to protect the rural quality of life in his district while allowing for cautious expansion. His passion has been the protection of the county's historic and cultural resources. Some of his biggest impacts have been in the areas of transportation, health care and airport and land use planning. He has supported economic growth by gaining an improved coach ordinance, providing an open forum for discussing the building permit process and encouraging reasonable changes to the county's long standing agricultural guidelines. In Supervisor Thornton's most recent term he was a strong advocate for the expansion of the telecommunication infrastructure in Tuolumne County.

Madam Speaker, I rise today to commend and congratulate Supervisor Mark Thornton upon his retirement from the Tuolumne County Board of Supervisors. I invite my colleagues to join me in wishing Supervisor Thornton many years of continued success.

TRIBUTE TO KAREN RICE, ASSISTANT IDAHO FALLS DISTRICT MANAGER, BLM

HON. MICHAEL K. SIMPSON

OF IDAHO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 13, 2009

Mr. SIMPSON. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor an exceptional public land manager in my district, Karen Rice, the Assistant Idaho Falls District Manager of the Bureau of Land Management, who is being recognized this week as the Public Lands Foundation's Outstanding Public Lands Professional Technician for 2008.

Now in its 20th year, the Public Lands Foundation award is an important recognition for special achievement by professional public land technicians and managers. The Public Lands Foundation is the only national membership organization dedicated solely to the protection and perpetuation of the National System of Public Lands under the administration of the BLM. It is a national nonprofit conservation organization whose members are primarily active and retired BLM employees.

As a member of that organization, Ms. Rice has worked hard for over 10 years on projects that protect wildlife habitat and promote responsible recreational activities along the South Fork of the Snake River and in the Henry's Lake Area of Critical Environmental Concern.

I am honored to take part in recognizing Ms. Rice today. I commend her for her tremendous efforts and dedication to such a crucial and worthwhile effort. Her efforts are paving the way for a more beautiful state and a more conservation-minded world.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. KAY GRANGER

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 13, 2009

Ms. GRANGER. Madam Speaker, on rollcall Nos. 8 and 9 I was absent from the House on official district business. Had I been present, I would have voted "no."

REPORT ON THE IMPERIAL
PRESIDENCY OF GEORGE W. BUSH

HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 13, 2009

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, today I have received a report prepared by the majority staff of the House Judiciary Committee, Committee, detailing numerous abuses by the Bush administration over the past 8 years, and recommending a number of steps to restore an appropriate Constitutional balance of power between the executive and legislative branches.

The report, based largely on oversight activities of the Judiciary Committee, and other committees, over the course of the 110th Congress, is titled "Reining in the Imperial Presidency: Lessons and Recommendations Relating to the Presidency of George W. Bush."

Issues examined include: The politicization of the Department of Justice; assaults on individual liberty, including extreme interrogation, extraordinary rendition, and warrantless wiretapping of U.S. citizens; the misuse of executive branch regulatory authority and Presidential signing statements; misleading manipulation of pre-Iraq War intelligence; improper retaliation against Administration critics; and excessive secrecy, including non-compliance with congressional oversight.

The report examines how the Bush Administration's legal approach to presidential power has eroded the Constitutional system of checks and balances designed by the Framers to preserve our liberty. It also recommends specific steps that this Congress and the incoming Obama administration should take to restore those checks and balances.

I am having the report posted to the Judiciary Committee Web site, in order to make it available to other members of the committee, to the full House, and to the American public.

I believe this report will be of tremendous benefit helping inform the changes we must make going forward—to repair the damage to our democracy, and to prevent similar abuses from occurring in the future.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. BRIAN BAIRD

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 13, 2009

Mr. BAIRD. Madam Speaker, unfortunately, due to record flooding in my congressional district and across Washington State, I was unable to be present on January 9, 2009 for votes. I take my voting responsibility very seriously. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on final passage of H.R. 11, the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act. I would also have voted "aye" on final passage of H.R. 12, the Paycheck Fairness Act. I am an original cosponsor of both bills, voted for their passage in the 110th Congress, and have been a strong and consistent supporter of legislation to end gender-based wage discrimination. I strongly oppose all forms of discrimination and believe that we must act to restore the right for women to challenge wage discrimination.

I was also not able to cast a vote on H. Res. 34, Recognizing Israel's right to defend itself against attacks from Gaza, reaffirming the United States strong support for Israel, and supporting the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. I have traveled to the region and met the families and individuals who are affected by the cycle of violence that continues to claim lives and wreak havoc on all sides of this conflict. As we continue to witness the humanitarian crisis spiral out of control in Gaza, and while rocket attacks persist against Israel, we are reminded that it is imperative for the United States to play a constructive role in pursuing a legitimate peace process that provides security and stability to the many innocent people trapped in the midst of this untenable status quo. Therefore, I would have voted present on this resolution.